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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 TOKYO 001384

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SUBJECT: IRAQI VICE PRESIDENT HASHIMI'S "EXCELLENT" VISIT  
TO TOKYO

REF: TOKYO 1268

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)  
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11. (C) SUMMARY: Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi's March 21-24 visit to Tokyo was "excellent," according to Iraqi Ambassador Ghanim al-Jumaily. During the visit PM Abe assured Hashimi his government would push to renew the Iraq Special Measures Law for two years, permitting the continued deployment to Iraq of Japan's Air Self Defense Force (ASDF) assets. Abe also said that the law would include a built in six-month review process, something Ambassador Jumaily had not heard before. Hashimi was told unambiguously by New Komeito Party head Ota that his party would fully support legislation to extend the deployment of the ASDF. In addition, National Security Advisor Koike told Hashimi that she is committed to moving forward with plans to provide Japanese martial arts training to Iraqi police forces, and METI Minister Amari said METI is ready to help the Iraqi Ministry of Oil even beyond current aid commitments. Hashimi also met with FM Aso, Minister of Defense Kyuma, members of the Diet, journalists, academics, the Arab Ambassadors, and Ambassador Schieffer, to whom he complained about Prime Minister al-Maliki, saying that Iraq cannot be a "one man show." Following Hashimi's departure, Iraqi Minister of State for National Dialogue Akram al-Hakim arrived in Tokyo with 12 others to participate in a reconciliation conference sponsored by the Japanese. Ambassador Jumaily confirmed that Prime Minister al-Maliki is scheduled to visit Tokyo April 8-11. END SUMMARY.

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"PERFECT TIMING"  
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12. (C) The March 21-24 visit to Japan by Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi came at the perfect time, Iraqi Ambassador Jumaily told Political Officer March 27. Jumaily explained that several weeks earlier he began to sense hesitation on the part of the New Komeito Party and even some members of the LDP to extending the Iraq Special Measures law, given the "pullout" of British forces and the increasing volume of political debate about Iraq in the U. S. Congress, now controlled by the Democrats. Jumaily thought it critical that Japanese leaders hear directly from Iraq how important continued Japanese engagement is. Jumaily confided that he only trusted three people to effectively deliver messages on behalf of the Iraqi government: Hashimi, Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salah, and Foreign Minister Hoshayr Zebari, so he pushed for Hashimi to visit.

13. (C) MOFA Second Middle East Division Principal Deputy Director Motosada Matano on March 27 confirmed to Political Officer that the opportunity to have the Iraqi Vice President in town just as the LDP and New Komeito were deciding whether to support the extension bill was invaluable. Both parties officially confirmed their support on March 27. Matano said that hearing directly from senior Iraqis about their needs is a huge positive factor for Diet members. As mentioned reftel, Japanese politicians are supportive of helping Iraq, but do not want to appear that they are making their decisions solely at the behest of the United States.

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MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER ABE  
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14. (C) The most important goal of the visit, Jumaily explained, was to obtain a commitment from the Japanese government to extend the Iraq Special Measures Law, set to expire on July 31, which enables Japan to deploy its ASDF assets in Iraq. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, in a meeting followed by dinner on March 23, assured Hashimi that his government will push for a two-year extension to the law and that he is confident it will pass. Jumaily observed that Abe also mentioned that the proposed legislation would include provisions for review every six months, a measure Jumaily had not heard of before.

15. (C) According to Matano, PM Abe "took note" of Hashimi's request that Japan extend the ASDF employment but was unable to commit the government to an action that only the Diet can approve. That said, Matano confirmed MOFA's expectation that

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the measure will pass, but not without some tough questioning by the opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ). Jumaily was of the same opinion, telling Political Officer he expects that when the legislation is debated in the Diet sometime in early May, the DPJ will not simply roll over. Needing an issue to set itself apart from the LDP in the Upper House elections this summer, he predicts the DPJ will seize upon public dissatisfaction with the campaign in Iraq to try to attract voters.

16. (C) Another measure of confidence concerning the prospects for passage of the legislation was added during Hashimi's meeting with Akihiro Ota, head of the New Komeito Party, the LDP's partner in the ruling coalition. When Hashimi directly asked Ota what message he should take back to Baghdad concerning the extension of the law, Ota replied that his party would "fully support" the measure. This message is significant because the New Komeito is founded upon principals of pacifism, and Jumaily was fearful that declining public support for Japanese involvement in Iraq would manifest itself among the rank and file of the party, impacting on the level of support at the leadership level.

17. (C) Hashimi briefed PM Abe on the security situation in Iraq, reported Matano, noting that the country's own security forces are not yet ready for the Multi-National Force to withdrawal. Removing MNF-I from Iraq would create a vacuum that would be filled by chaos, Hashimi told Abe. The Iraqis want to be independent, continued Hashimi, but they must be realistic, too. For this reason, continued Japanese support is crucial to the future stability of Iraq. Hashimi said he does not agree that Iraq is currently in a "civil war" and said he is confident that once stability is restored, inter-sectarian relations will return to their historical norm, marked by many intermarriages and mixed neighborhoods.

18. (C) Regarding internal Iraqi government relations, Hashimi subtly complained to PM Abe about Prime Minister Maliki, reported Matano. Hashimi complained that Maliki cannot run Iraq by himself and must include the views of others. He told PM Abe that he believes there are three

important requirements if Iraqi reconciliation is to be successful:

- Everyone must be engaged, including insurgent leaders, who must be engaged through a political reconciliation process;
- The Constitution must be revised to make Iraq a country without internal borders;
- The concept of democracy must be successfully introduced into Iraqi politics.

Hashimi asked Abe, in confidence, to press these points with Prime Minister Maliki when he visits Tokyo next month, said Matano.

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ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR IRAQ FORTHCOMING?  
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¶9. (C) Vice President Hashimi also met with National Security Advisor Koike who, according to Jumaily, told Hashimi she was "committed" to help provide training to Iraqi security forces in the form of Japanese martial arts instruction. This is a project Jumaily has long been working on, as he believes it is necessary for the Japanese to be engaged "on the ground" with Iraq beyond just maintaining a reconstruction donor relationship. He admitted that despite Koike's endorsement of a training role for the Japanese, details such as to where this training would be carried out (among others) have yet to be addressed. One idea is to have a "train-the-trainer" program in Japan, but this would involve long-term stays in Japan by Iraqi instructors. Jumaily prefers that the Japanese set up a training facility in Irbil. Matano confirmed this discussion, noting that Koike's proposal to provide martial arts training goes beyond the physical aspects of the training but, more importantly, would also provide the ethical and disciplinary ethos required of security force members in a democratic society. He said Koike originally proposed setting up such programs in Jordan or Egypt, but Hashimi rejoined that Iraq would prefer not to involve a third country. When asked by Political Officer whether Koike's proposal has widespread support

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within other branches of the bureaucracy, Matano replied "we could probably set something up."

¶10. (C) METI Minister Amari told Hashimi that his ministry is prepared to extend further assistance to the Iraqi Ministry of Oil above and beyond amounts already pledged. Jumaily said that Hashimi gave Amari and others a very good summary of where things stand with regard to the draft petroleum law, which he is hopeful will be finally adopted by the Council of Representatives in two months.

¶11. (C) According to both Matano and Jumaily, Hashimi's meetings with Foreign Minister Aso, Defense Minister Kyuma, and others were basically courtesy calls in which Hashimi thanked Japan for all it has done to support Iraq and asked for it to continue its support by extending the ASDF mandate. FM Aso was "relieved and happy" to hear from Hashimi about Ota's unwavering support for the extension, reported Jumaily.

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MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR SCHIEFFER  
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¶12. (C) During the visit, Ambassador Jumaily invited Ambassador Schieffer to a private luncheon meeting with Hashimi who, echoing remarks in his meeting with Abe, complained to Ambassador Schieffer about Prime Minister Maliki, remarking that "Iraq cannot be a one man show." Hashimi also told Ambassador Schieffer the United States needs to take steps to enhance Hashimi's position within the Sunni community. He said he has supported the United States

on many issues that are not popular with the Sunnis and has received nothing in exchange. Unless he can show more tangible results to his constituency, his position will be undercut. Hashimi told the Ambassador that the Iraqis need to resolve the petroleum law issue, but he is hopeful this impasse is moving toward a satisfactory resolution. It is a "myth" widely believed in the United States that the Sunni regions have no oil resources. An agreement must be implemented whereby both the national government and the provinces can approve oil exploration contracts together, he stressed. On the security situation, Hashimi told Ambassador Schieffer he is somewhat positive about how things are going, but that it is too early to tell whether the current "surge" will yield permanent results. Hashimi said Iran was showing more flexibility, which he took as a good sign. Syria, he said, wants to have a normal relationship with Iraq and is talking about a joint venture on a gas field near their border. (COMMENT: Embassy realizes that Hashimi wanted to see the Ambassador in order to deliver a message to the President through an interlocutor different from the ones he normally deals with in Baghdad, and that what he had to say here is consistent with what we understand Embassy Baghdad is hearing on a regular basis. END COMMENT.)

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MEETING WITH ARAB AMBASSADORS  
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¶13. (C) While in Tokyo, Hashimi met with the Arab Ambassadors, explaining that while everyone would like to see Coalition Forces depart Iraq, it would be foolhardy to set an arbitrary timetable for such a withdrawal. He spoke frankly of the capabilities and shortcomings of the Iraqi Security Forces and said that until they can be purged of criminal and militia elements, it would be fatal to require the withdrawal of Coalition Forces. He informed them it would take a long time to build a professional and loyal security force capable of providing security in Iraq. Jumaily reported that even the Syrian ambassador seemed to take note, although another participant at the meeting, the Lebanese Charge d'Affaires, told Political Officer separately that, at the meeting, Hashimi had responded forcefully and pointedly to the Syrian's comments about the presence of foreign forces in Iraq, remarking that influence and meddling by nearby "outsiders" were not helping the situation.

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COMMENTS ON IRAN  
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¶14. (C) Ambassador Jumaily told Political Officer that prior to visiting Tokyo, Hashimi had stopped in Syria and Iran. Jumaily's comments were consistent with Hashimi's in the

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meeting he had with Ambassador Schieffer. Jumaily said Hashimi told him that Iran seems to have taken notice of "Arab" concerns regarding the situation in Iraq, as well as in Lebanon, and is listening more to their point of view, particularly that of the Saudis. Iran, posited Jumaily, is nervous that heightened Sunni Arab concern about Iranian influence and activities in Iraq and elsewhere will unite them against Tehran, which would rather portray regional problems as "Islam vs. the West" as opposed to "Sunni vs. Shia" conflicts. And with the United States and the United Nations tightening the screws on Iran's nuclear program, Tehran believes it may need to call on the support of Muslim nations, and therefore does not want to further alienate other regional powers.

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CONFERENCE ON IRAQI RECONCILIATION IN PROGRESS  
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¶15. (C) Following Hashimi's departure, Iraqi Minister of State for National Dialogue Akram al-Hakim arrived as the

head of a 12 member intersectorian delegation to participate in a Japan-sponsored conference on national reconciliation (reftel.) Eight of the delegation are Council of Representative members. This conference represents an effort by Japan to draw on its goodwill with all parties to foster better communications among the different factions. Jumaily said he didn't expect any major developments to flow from this conference, but said he thinks it will help the Japanese to realize the complexities of the internal problems facing Iraq and may give them ideas about further areas in which they can be of assistance.

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VISIT BY PRIME MINISTER MALIKI CONFIRMED  
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¶16. (C) Prime Minister Maliki is scheduled to arrive in Tokyo on April 8 and will depart on April 11, Jumaily confirmed. His delegation is tentatively set to include the Ministers of Oil, Electricity, Municipalities, Industry, and the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs.

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COMMENT  
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¶17. (C) Vice President Hashimi's visit was a success from the perspectives of both the Iraqis and the Japanese. The Iraqis received assurances that Japan remains committed to assisting with the reconstruction and that the Abe Administration intends to extend the deployment of ASDF assets for two years, despite mounting political uncertainties in the United States, U.K., and in Japan. (The coalition parties are expected to submit a bill to the Diet on March 30 requesting a two-year extension of ASDF forces.) In addition, Iraq was told Japan is interested in expanding ties not only in the economic sector but in the security sector as well. For its part, the Abe Administration was able to present to potentially recalcitrant Diet members a ranking Iraqi official who appealed directly to them for support. This, coupled with a recently received letter from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon asking Japan to continue to provide ASDF support to the U.N.'s mission in Iraq, gives Abe and the LDP the political cover they need to extend the ASDF mission. In addition, the Hashimi visit, followed by the reconciliation conference and the upcoming Maliki visit, allows Japan to advance its desire to upgrade relations with Iraq to a "long-term strategic relationship," as reported reftel. And on a personal note, the visit also gave Hashimi a chance to vent about his frustrations with Maliki to both the Prime Minister and the Ambassador. The message we should take away from this is that Japan under Abe remains committed to its relationship with Iraq, despite verbal gaffes by members of the cabinet, and that we should continue to press them, gently, for support where it can be given.

SCHIEFFER